

**Division of Family and Children Services
FY 2020 Travel Policy**

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Out of State Travel Policy and Procedures

Out of State Travel (Interstate Travel)

Employees are considered traveling outside Georgia when their official responsibilities must be performed at an out-of-state location.

Employees who are working in Georgia but spending the night in a bordering state are not considered to be traveling outside of Georgia.

Proposed out-of-state travel must receive prior approval using the Interstate Travel Request Forms 5354-Employee or 5354-Child when transporting children, or the Out of State Travel Request when traveling to conferences/meetings.

Procedures for Out of State Travel – Child Related

- A. Employee should determine who will need to travel, just the child(ren), depending on age, or the child(ren) and a DFCS case manager.
- B. The Forms 5354-Employee and 5354-Child that are required to transport children to and from another state must be completed and then approved by the following:
 - Employee
 - Supervisor
 - County Director
 - Regional Director
 - District Director

EXCEPTION: In emergency situations, the county director can approve out-of-state travel, but the Interstate Travel Request Forms 5354-Employee and 5354-Child should still be submitted to the applicable approving authorities as soon as possible for approval.

- C. The DFCS case manager should contact Travel, Inc. in order to obtain the best rates for the travel accommodations needed.
1. **Airfare – Travel, Inc. can be contacted by calling (770) 291-4200 or 1-800-241-0944. Travel, Inc. will ask the agency to provide them with the arrival date and time, Organization Number (4270000000) and/or County DFCS to be charged.**
 2. **Car Rental - If a car needs to be rented to transport the child from the airport to their destination, Hertz Rental should be used. Hertz is the primary contractor when using a rental car for out-of-state travel. The account # is 44052615.**
- D. If the employee needs a Travel Advance, the approved 5354-Employee form must be submitted with the travel advance form. The 5354-Children form will not be required until the Travel Expense Statement is submitted.
- E. If the employee is not requesting a Travel Advance, the approved 5354-Employee and 5354-Child forms will be submitted along with the Travel Statement when requesting reimbursement.

NOTE: A travel statement must be completed regardless of whether the employee owes the agency, the agency owes the employee or there is no balance due.

GOOD TO KNOW TIPS:

- In the event a DFCS caseworker or colleague cannot transport the child (ren), then the county should seek assistance from an approved WRAP provider. Pay from WRAP (518).
- If there are unusual circumstances that dictate the need to have a CCI or CPA case manager transport the child (ren), a waiver approved by the Fiscal Program Director is required and must be attached to the Travel, Inc. itineraries and all other supporting documentation when submitted to Regional Accounting in order to pay from state funds (504/604).
- Travel, Inc. and all other associated cost for any non-employee, such as a parent, who travels with a DFCS child must be charged to county funds.

Out of State Travel – Non-Child Related

- A. For any travel out-of-state other than transporting children, the Out of State Travel Request form is required and must be approved by the following:
- County Director
 - DFCS Division Director
 - Fiscal Operations Manager for budget approval
 - Ethics Officer if 3rd party is paying travel expense
- B. The DFCS case manager should contact Travel, Inc. in order to obtain the best rates for the travel accommodations needed.
1. **Airfare – Travel, Inc. can be contacted by calling (770) 291-4200 or 1-800-241-0944. Travel, Inc. will ask the agency to provide them with the arrival date and time, Organization Number (4270000000) and/or County DFCS to be charged.**
 2. **Car Rental - If a car needs to be rented, Hertz Rental should be used. Hertz is the primary contractor when using a rental car for out-of-state travel. The account # is 44052615.**
- C. If the employee needs a Travel Advance, the approved Out-of-State Travel Request form must be submitted with the travel advance form.
- D. If the employee is not requesting a Travel Advance, the approved Out-of-State Travel Request form will be submitted along with the Travel Statement when requesting reimbursement.

NOTE: A travel statement must be completed regardless of whether the employee owes the agency, the agency owes the employee or there is no balance due.

Meal rate (Out-of-State Travel)

- A. Employees should make every effort to stay within the prescribed meal limits.
- B. Reference should be made to the federal per diem rates in order to determine appropriate meal limits.
 - Per Diem Rates for United States <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>
 - Per Diem Rates for Outside United States https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp
- C. For out-of-state trips involving multiple travel destinations, please reach out to the DFCS-Travel-Waiver unit to assist you in determining the correct per diem rate to be claimed.
- D. Please remember that the GSA website per diem rates include an incidental charge which is not to be included as part of your per diem allowance.
- E. An individual taking annual or sick leave while away from headquarters on official business is not entitled to meals for the period of leave.

GOOD TO KNOW TIPS:

- Reimbursement for child (ren) meals are limited to GSA rates for the area to which they are traveling.

Meals during Overnight Travel outside of Georgia

- A. Per Diem compensation for meals is to be reported on the Travel Expense Statement, Form 726, by date, location, and amount.
- B. Employees traveling “Out of State” overnight are generally eligible for per diem amounts designed to cover the cost of three (3) meals per day for all days on travel status **other than** the day of departure and the day of return.
1. Travelers are eligible for 75 percent (75%) of the total per diem rate on the first and last day of travel.
 - a. For example, if the per diem rate allows a \$54 total reimbursement, \$41.00 would be allowable on a travel departure or return day ($\$54 \times 0.75 = \41 .) As a result, the time of departure and time of return are not considerations for calculating the Meal Per Diem when associated with overnight travel.
 2. Per Diems cannot be claimed when meals are provided. On the travel departure or return day, the per diem reimbursement rate is reduced by the amount of the provided meal(s) after the 75% proration is calculated.
 - a. For example, if the per diem allows a \$54 total reimbursement, and lunch was provided at no cost on a travel departure or return day, the total allowable reimbursement for that day would be \$26 ($\$54 \times 0.75 = \41 less \$15 lunch = \$26.00).

Reimbursement for Lodging

- A. Lodging will be reimbursed for reasonable actual costs. An employee should seek the least expensive option available considering proximity to their business destination and safety.
- B. All lodging claims must be documented with receipts and must be at a business that offers lodging to the general public, such as hotels and motels and not a private residence (exception would be AirBNB).
- C. Daily lodging expenses will either be paid by cash or personal credit card and must be itemized on the travel expense statement and substantiated by an original receipt, showing a “0.00” balance.
- D. Cash Advances for lodging can be processed by Regional Accounting. The following items are required:
 - Travel advance form
 - Hotel confirmation
 - Authorized Form 5354-Employee or Out-of-State Travel Request Form

NOTE: These checks will either be mailed to the employee’s home, to the DFCS office as designated by the employee, or the employee can choose to have the advance direct deposited into their bank account. If an employee chooses to pick up their travel advance, mileage cannot will not be reimbursed.

Other Transportation

- A. The most reasonable and customary means of transportation should be used when traveling.
- B. The State will reimburse for shuttle or airport vans to and from airports and railroad stations when such service is not included in air and rail fares, and where public transportation is not practical.

NOTE: Although receipts are recommended, employees are not required to submit receipts for travel by mass transportation, shuttle services and airport vans. However, a point-to-point explanation is required for each item reimbursed.

- C. Taxi services between business destinations while on travel status are reimbursable, receipts are required.
- D. Uber services between business destinations while on travel status are reimbursable, receipts are required.

Transportation by Automobile

- A. If the use of an automobile for out-of-state travel is economically advantageous, the employee shall be entitled to:
 - Reimbursement of mileage at the allowable state mandated rate for miles traveled in the performance of official duties.